

**Sierra Nevada Conservancy Grant Program
Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control,
River and Coastal Protection Act of 2006 (Proposition 84)**

Subregion: EAST **County:** MONO

Applicant: MONO LAKE COMMITTEE

Project Title: MONO BASIN RESOURCE STEWARDSHIP

Reference Number: SNC 070307

PROJECT SCOPE

The stewardship project will focus on restoration, monitoring, interpretation, education, and other visitor services in the Mono Basin. This project will focus on Mono Lake, Lee Vining Creek, Rush Creek, Mill Creek, and the De Chambeau Ponds. The overall goals of the project are:

- To assist in restoration efforts that will help the riparian and lakeshore ecosystems recover from previous damage;
- To maintain the land and water resources in relation to increased use and visitation that has grown to over 250,000 annual visitors.

Monitoring is a key component to this project and provides data that will help guide future decisions about recreational uses, grazing, development, and other land and water uses. Public education that includes outreach to urban youth has been a major focus of the Mono Lake Committee's mission to build an understanding of this unique watershed and the natural resources of the Eastern Sierra region.

This monitoring, stewardship, and restoration project is a collaborative effort of the Mono Lake Committee, Friends of the Inyo, and the U.S. Forest Service and has matching funds and in-kind services in the amount of \$67,400.

The project includes:

- Creek flow and groundwater monitoring;
- Water quality monitoring;
- Invasive plant species control;
- Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) impacts monitoring;
- Education and interpretation;
- Public education events (2 per year);
- Air quality site monitoring;
- Restoration projects along creeks and ponds.

PROJECT SCHEDULE

| DETAILED PROJECT DELIVERABLES | TIMELINE |
|---|--|
| Staffing for Resource Monitoring & Interpretation | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hire seasonal resource staff to perform restoration, monitoring and reporting• Coordinate, recruit and train volunteers as needed | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• April 2008• April 2008 through October 2009 |
| Creek Flow Monitoring: | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establish monitoring locations along Mill, Wilson, Rush and Lee Vining Creeks• Collect stream-flow data on Mill and Wilson Creeks and collect piezometer data on Rush and Lee Vining Creeks• Review available data available from Mono Lake Committee and Mono Basin Research website | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• April 2008 through February 2010 |
| Water Quality Monitoring: | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conduct quarterly ambient water chemistry monitoring 4 times per year, during 2008 and 2009 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• April, June, August, November in 2008 & 2009 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conduct annual Benthic Macroinvertebrate Inventory (BMI) collection and analysis | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• September 2008 & |

| | |
|--|---|
| | 2009 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit data summary, analysis, and annual report to public and Regional Water Quality Control Board | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • December 2008 & 2009 |
| Vegetation Monitoring: | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct annual streamside vegetation survey including native and non-native species | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May & June 2008 & 2009 |
| Invasive Species Control & Monitoring | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish research plots in the annual streamside vegetation survey locations and assign invasive removal treatments to each plot | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May 2008 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct non-native, invasive species removal in plots and monitor removal effectiveness monthly | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • June 2008 through September 2009 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct summer volunteer invasive removal “pulling parties” minimum two/yr, outside treatment plot locations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summer 2008 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present findings of non-native invasive species experiment results to California Invasive Plant Council | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fall 2009 |
| Creek Restoration: | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct site assessment information for each restoration site prior to initiating restoration activities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May 2008 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiate restoration of DeChambeau Ponds OHV trespass rehabilitation and collect appropriate restoration data | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May through September 2008 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiate restoration of Mono Craters and collect appropriate restoration data | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May through September 2008 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify 2009 restoration projects | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May through September 2008 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compile and analyze restoration data | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • October 2008 |
| OHV Monitoring and Reporting: | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist with patrolling and monitoring for resource damage from OHV impacts around Mono Lake, Mono Craters, DeChambeau Ponds, and Sierra tributary creeks and other off-site OHV areas | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • April 2008 through October 2009 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post and block off illegal access areas, improve directional and regulatory signage, rehabilitate illegal use areas | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • April 2008 through October 2009 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct restoration and monitoring activities at Mono Lake, Mono Craters, DeChambeau Ponds, and Sierra tributary creeks and other off-site OHV | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May 2008 through October 2009 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct outreach to dispersed recreational users— describing appropriate recreational use, resource concerns, and natural history interpretation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May 2008 through October 2009 |
| Air Quality Site Management Monitoring: | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retrieve air quality data retrieval from IMPROVE air quality monitoring station on Conway Summit, weekly | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May 2008 through December 2009 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compile and submit data compilation to Forest Service and University of California, Davis every three weeks for EPA analysis | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May 2008 through December 2009 |
| Reporting: | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete bi-annual and annual comprehensive monitoring reports and submit to SNC & Forest Service. Reports will include the results of the data analyses for air quality, water quality, creek flow, vegetation monitoring, invasive species control and restoration activities. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • October 2008, April 2009, & October 2009 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report on recreational contacts, use trends, accomplishments and future needs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • December 2008 & 2009 |
| Education: | |
| Bird Chautauqua event Assist with coordinating | June 2008 |
| Educational stewardship projects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan and coordinate 1 to 2 projects with local, visiting, and/or MLC Outdoor Experiences students each year including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jeffrey pine planting along Rush or Lee Vining Creek spring 2008 • Invasive plant control at appropriate sites Identify education project to be implemented in 2009 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May 2008 through December 2009 • September through December 2008 |
| Final report/final payment request | April 2010 |

PROJECT COSTS

| PROJECT BUDGET CATEGORIES | TOTAL SNC FUNDING |
|--|--------------------------|
| Invasive species control | \$6,400 |
| Restoration | \$7,200 |
| Public education, interpretation | \$5,400 |
| Supplies and Equipment | |
| Incidental supplies and Equipment | \$5,000 |
| Vehicle (surplus FS pick-up) and fuel | \$24,000 |
| Staff | |
| Water monitoring/Air monitoring (staff salaries) | \$38,400 |
| Training | \$1,500 |
| Administration | \$8,200 |
| Grand Total | \$96,100 |

Letters of Support:

- Inyo Forest Service
- Friends of the Inyo
- California Resources Agency

Recommendation:

Staff recommends the authorization of this grant for the requested \$96,100.

2. Project Summary – Mono Basin Resource Stewardship

This project proposed by the Mono Lake Committee (MLC), in partnership with Friends of the Inyo (FOI), and the Inyo National Forest (USFS), is focused on resource stewardship, with a focus on restoration, monitoring, and interpretation and visitor services in the Mono Basin. The project property is USFS land in the Mono Basin, mostly within the Mono Basin National Forest Scenic Area.

The project area spans the USFS land in the Basin, and includes the following specific components:

- Creek flow and piezometer monitoring, both surface and subsurface flows
- Water Quality Monitoring sites established on Lee Vining Creek
- Invasive plant monitoring and control along riparian corridors and lakeshore
- Creek restoration; campsite and motorized route delineation on Parker Creek, native tree planting on Rush Creek
- Off-route off-highway vehicle (OHV) use monitoring, education, and restoration
- Resource monitoring and interpretation
- Assistance with the annual Mono Basin Bird Chatauqua event
- Educational stewardship projects with local and visiting school and community groups
- Management of the Conway Summit Air Quality Station
- Wildlife habitat restoration ongoing at the DeChambeau Ponds

These projects will all aid the recovery of the Mono Lake ecosystem, which has been gaining momentum as of 1994 with the State Water Board ordered rise in the lake level and mandated restoration. The projects above illustrate the broad resource needs in the Mono Basin. Located at the eastern gateway to Yosemite National Park, annual visitation to the Mono Basin is over 250,000 people and expected to rise. Increasing impacts from visitors and recreational users make these resource restoration and monitoring needs even more apparent.

Committed funds include \$7,000 annually for the weekly management of the Conway Summit Air Quality Station, and \$3,000 annually for restoration ongoing at the DeChambeau Ponds from USFS. In-kind services include housing provided by USFS (\$6,000); oversight of the 3 monitoring sites on Lee Vining Creek from the Eastern Sierra Water Watchers program (\$3,000 annually); and volunteers' time (\$14,700 annually). MLC, FOI, and USFS will provide tools, supplies, and other equipment (\$5,000 annually).

The total Grant Request from the Sierra Nevada Conservancy is \$96,100.